THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (DR. A.K. PATEL): (a) For ensuring availability of drugs at reasonable prices, the Govt. has been promulgating Drugs (Prices Control) Order under Essential Commodities Act, 1955 from time to time. The current order known as Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1955 was promulgated on 6th January, 1995. At present, 74 drugs alongwith their formulations identified by the application of criteria in para 22.7.2 of "Modifications in Drug Policy, 1986" are under price control. To ensure more availability of drugs at competitive and reasonable prices, the pharmaceutical sector has been totally delicenced except foi few items. This will encourage more units to come up in the pharmaceutical sector. Moreover, under the present Exim Policy, most of the drugs can be imported without a licence.

(b) and (c) The Government is reviewing the policy of licensing and reserving certain bulk drugs for manufacture by public sectors.

(d) No such instances of nexus between multinational companies and the bulk drugs producing companies has come to the notice of the Government.

Shortage of Fertilizers

2186. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have receivec reports of shortage of fertilizers/DAP from farmers' organisation and State Governments;

(b) if so, the names of organisations/ State Governments that have reported shortages; and

(c) the details of immediate steps being taken by Central Government to meet the situation without delay?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (DR. A.K. PATEL): (a) and (b) Except urea all other fertilizers including Diammonium Phosphate (DAP) and Muriate of Potash (MOP) are decontrolled. Their availability and distribution is dependent on the market forces of demand and supply operating within the parameters of Concession Scheme of Government of India.

In Kharif '98, shortages were reported of MOP by the Southern States, and also by the States of Orissa, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Shortages were also reported by North Eastern Fertilizers Dealers' Association, Guwahati and Coconut Growers Associations, Pollachi. Shortages were also reported of Sulphate of Potash (SOP) by the Karnataka Grapes Growers Association, Bangalore.

During Rabi 1998-99, temporary shortages of DAP had/have been reported by the States of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Utta. Pradesh.

(c) Shortages of MOP during Kharif '98 were mainly due to lower level of its imports. The MOP imports have been lined up since then and there are no shortages being experienced during the current season. In respect of SOP, the shortage was redressed during Kharif '98 after the arrival of additional quantities which Indian Potash Limited (IPL) had managed. Since then there has been no problem of availability of SOP.

For tackling the localised shortages of DAP in the aforesaid States, the Government took the following measures:—

(i) Priority was accorded in berthing of DAP vessels at JNPT and Vizag.

(ii) The priority was accorded in movement by rail of DAP from both the plants and the ports to these States.

(iii) Additional imports of 55,000 MTs of DAP have been arranged from Jordan on priority through IPL.